

Town & Village of Swanton
MINUTES
JOINT LEGISLATIVE BODY MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2013 @ 7:00 p.m.

Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488

Present: John Lavoie, Selectboard Chair; Joel Clark, Kathy Lavoie, and Dick Thompson, Selectmen; David Jescavage, Town Administrator; Reginald Beliveau, Village Manager; Adam Paxman, Eugene Labombard, Village Trustees; Ron Kilburn, Village President; Yaasha Wheeler, Secretary; Warren Fournier; Chief Leonard Stell, Swanton Village Police Chief; Channel 15.

A. Call to Order & Roll Call

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Thompson led those present in the pledge of allegiance. Mr. Thompson also asked for a moment of silence for Rita Davis, who had recently passed away.

C. Minutes

Approve minutes of 7/8/2013 JLB Meeting

John Lavoie made a motion, seconded by Adam Paxman, to accept the meeting minutes of 7/8/2013 as printed. Motion carried.

D. Public Comment – None.

E. Meeting Topics

1. Close out report on 250th anniversary celebration

Mr. Thompson thanked the committee for doing a great job, which far exceeded his expectations and was very educational about Swanton's history. He added that the fireworks display had received many enthusiastic comments.

Mr. Kilburn presented the 250th anniversary celebration report, which included the following topics: the mission, the committee meetings, the website, the possibilities and realities, the banners and logos, the utilization of community resources, the meetings and programs (with a total of 15 programs or events throughout the community), concurrent house resolution 122 (adopted and presented to Swanton as a framed copy), community photograph, and finances (totaling just over \$200 in surplus).

Mr. Jescavage thanked the chamber of commerce as well for allowing them to use the office.

2. Potential Future Plans for Annual Fireworks Display

Mr. Beliveau said that the cost was about \$3000 from North Star Fireworks, probably because it was an off-season event. The JLB discussed the possibility of making the fireworks display an annual event, to be tied in with a community event and probably to be kept around the date of August 17th (Swanton's birthday).

3. Status of Conveyance of Dam, Land, and Water Rights from Town to Village

Mr. Kilburn presented the proposed deed, as prepared by Steven Marshall. Mr. Thompson agreed that the Selectboard would review the deed at their next meeting and authorize Mr.

Jescavage as town agent to sign the document. Mr. Labombard questioned whether the 2980 square inches referenced in the deed were correct; Mr. Kilburn said it was.

4. Status of Paving of First Street

Mr. Beliveau stated that the paving will not be done for quite a while. He had learned during the Route 78 conversation that 16% of the traffic through Swanton was truck traffic, which is higher than the normal percentage of other towns with truck traffic at 3 to 4 percent. Even with the heavy truck traffic, the state will not increase the paving schedule to more often than 16 years, plus or minus 5 years. If the Town wanted to do more work within that time frame, it could take advantage of the federal grants. The year 2016 would see some definite work.

Mr. Beliveau added that the Village was starting with the Fourth Street water project, Canada Street would be done in the spring of 2014, and Second Street would be done before the end of the current year. Letters would be sent to area residents to inform them of the work.

10. Village Water Infrastructure/Expansion Update

Mr. Beliveau stated that bore testing would be done in October for the new expansion, and that he had cautioned the workers to finish the testing before bow hunting season, so that they did not interrupt the hunters. The testing would be done between October 15th and 16th. The rest of the project for transmission would start in the spring and end in the late summer of 2014. Mr. Thompson asked if the Village had considered running water to the airport and Mr. Beliveau replied that the Village had considered it and planned to have a valve for expansion. The main line would be done by autumn 2014. The impact to the school would be minimized, and the school was fine with the project as discussed.

5. Report on New Fire Truck

Timothy Girard, the new chief of the Village Fire Department, introduced himself. He explained that the new truck was in service and had seen some action (a structure fire plus numerous accidents) and was over 90% stocked on equipment, with a few minor things to take care of when the truck went for an upgrade. Mr. Thompson asked to know the significance of the numbers 13 E-1 and 13 E-2 on the fire department vehicles, and Mr. Girard replied that 13 was Swanton's radio code designation for dispatch, so 13 E-1 meant Swanton's engine #1. Mr. Beliveau listed Mr. Girard's past accomplishments and qualifications and stated that he was glad that Mr. Girard had come forward to run as fire chief.

6. Status of New Town Garage and Open House

Mr. Clark informed the board that the Town was almost ready to take occupancy and overall was very pleased with the project. Swanton residents and people from neighboring towns were welcome to attend the open house on October 19th, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. There would be refreshments of some sort.

7. Status of Woods Hill Road Project

Mr. Clark stated that the project was a great example of teamwork between Sheldon and Swanton. The road had been raised 4 to 5 feet, with plans to pave by the end of October. He reminded the public to drive the speed limit through that section. Mr. Girard expressed concern about the drop-off on the north side as a potential for accidents, and Mr. Clark agreed to do a site visit to consider the situation.

8. Health Insurance Plans – Potential Concerns/Issues

It was noted that the Town premiums might decrease; however, the Village premium would increase. Mr. Jescavage informed the board that municipalities should register their employees in October, and individuals should register themselves for their preferred plan online in November with the help of navigators. Only two companies were offering plans (Blue Cross Blue

Shield and MVP). Mr. Jescavage recommended BCBS because it had national coverage, whereas MVP was regional.

Mr. Beliveau added that the village and town would determine their contributions toward each employee's health care, and that if an employee chose a more expensive plan, the employee would pay the difference through a payroll deduction. Kathy Lavoie recommended considering that contribution now, and evaluating whether percentage or dollar amount was the better plan. Mr. Beliveau added that the penalty for opting out was more serious than people might believe since the fee was either \$96 or 1% of an individual's annual income, whichever is greater. The fee, therefore, could end up being quite expensive.

9. Project 10 and Summer Heat Wave Activity

Mr. Thompson asked how the heat wave influenced project 10. Mr. Beliveau replied that the village has no authority to turn the switch on or off on Project 10. At one point in the summer, it ran almost 8 hours one weekend, but it was not visible to him that it had come on until he spoke with the maintenance man the next morning. The project was very important to the New England power grid and that it was most efficient if run full-time. Currently it was up to almost 24 to 26 megawatts per unit.

10. Already discussed.

11. Discussion of Route 78 Improvement Project

Mr. Thompson stated that he had attended the VTrans meeting on the 18th. He had been on the committee in the year 2000 that had helped to design a new route for 78, which would eliminate the S-curve near the wildlife building, and include a 500-foot pier bridge to allow for wildlife traffic. Mr. Paxman expressed disappointment that the plan did not call for continuing the extra 150 yards toward the Village, since the bridge was a huge need. Mr. Thompson added that the state of Vermont had agreed to never add any more bypasses and that Swanton was one of the most archaeologically sensitive areas in the state of Vermont. Mr. Paxman emphasized that at some point, the quality of human life had to take precedence over archaeology, and he felt that Swanton was at that point.

Mr. Beliveau added that Mr. Warren Fournier had a very relevant and informative perspective on the issue, if one took the time to listen. Mr. Warren Fournier explained that Swanton knew its own needs best, adding that the highways were terrible despite the Swanton taxes, and that the state claimed to have no money, yet spent it. The main entrance to the village was the bridge, and the weight limits were constantly being violated with the increase of truck traffic. If anything happened to that bridge, hundreds of people would be cut off from Swanton Village. He recommended dropping the speed limit near Swanton Lumber to relieve congestion. He added that an active committee was necessary in order to gain action from the state and that action had to be taken now, because it might take a long time to win stuff for Swanton.

12. 2014 Budget Concerns and Major Issues

It was agreed that the biggest mutual concern was the health insurance issue.

13. Southern Growth Center Update

Mr. Jescavage presented a document with suggested changes to the Southern Growth district, which eliminated the core overlay and the requirement to develop only with municipal water and sewer. Mr. Thompson added that the restriction to 30,000 square feet of retail space hindered growth. Mr. Jescavage noted that Catherine Dimitruk of the Regional Planning Commission had explained that removing the requirements for municipal water and sewer put the town's regulations in conflict with the regional plan, which required municipal water and sewer for developments under act 250 that met the definition of substantial regional impact. Mr. Clark summed up that projects under 30,000 square feet would not be impacted by the regional regulations, but projects over 30,000 square feet would be, because they would fall under act

250. Kathy Lavoie reminded the board that the Southern Growth district had been the subject of much discussion in the past and recommended a sensitive approach to any changes. The board agreed to meet with the Planning Commission in the future to discuss the Southern Growth district issues and needs.

14. Public Comment – None.

F. Any Other Necessary Business

Mr. Thompson informed the board of the ongoing vandalism along the rail trail and the methods by which the town was trying to create more vandal-proof signs. Chief Stell added that he had been contacted in the past about the vandalism, but had received no reports this year.

Mr. Thompson informed the public of a 5k race to be held on Sunday the 29th at 10 a.m. The race would run along Beebe Road, South River Road, over the bridge to Robin Hood Drive, turn at Carrell Concrete, and end at the Swanton recreational field.

Kathy Lavoie highly recommended public attendance of the showing of the Hungry Heart, a video about prescription drug addiction. The showing would be on October 6th at MVU, with a follow-up community forum on the 16th at the Swanton Village Complex. She had 50 free tickets available for individuals who could not afford the \$6 to \$12 to see the movie. Future viewings would be held in Enosburg and Richford. Chief Stell agreed that the film was very powerful and that the community forum would offer a chance to discuss how the community could work together to support people in recovery and prevent further victims of the drug trade. Mr. Kilburn added that the film destroyed stereotypes and highlighted the potential part of well-meaning doctors in overprescribing drugs. Kathy Lavoie informed the public that the forum discussion would become part of the curriculum in classrooms, so it was important to attend.

Mr. Paxman asked the board to give serious thought to requesting a bypass, despite the state's restrictions on bypasses. He was willing to chair a committee to pursue that item, if that's what was necessary. Mr. Kilburn urged the JLB members to take advantage of the VTrans invitation to send written comments by September 28th. Mr. Thompson noted that an official traffic count might also be worth requesting, since the last count had been done in 1998. The board members discussed the heavy truck traffic; Mr. Fournier noted that he had counted 27 trucks in 15 minutes.

Mr. Kilburn extended an invitation to participate in a survey about the Swanton Community downtown project, with a meeting on November 6th at 7 p.m. in the community room at the Swanton school apartments on Church Street. The survey could be found at www.swanton.net/downtown.

Mr. Beliveau stated that a traffic camera was going to be installed near the Village square near the chamber office, panning from the green to Merchant's Row.

G. Executive Session – None.

H. Adjournment

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. John Lavoie, to adjourn at 8:34 p.m. Motion carried.

Typed on September 27, 2013
Minutes by Yaasha Wheeler
Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Swanton Town Clerk

Date

Dianne Day, Swanton Village Clerk

Date